



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY

---

Citation:

Hayburn, J and Jowett, G and Gledhill, A (2024) Understanding the Prevalence and Burden of Harassment Faced by Female Esports Players. In: The 17th European Congress of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 15 - 19 Jul 2024, Innsbruck, Austria.

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/11292/>

Document Version:

Conference or Workshop Item (Accepted Version)

---

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on [openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

# **Understanding the Prevalence and Burden of Harassment Faced by Female Esports Players**

Jessica Hayburn, Gareth Jowett, Adam Gledhill

**Background and Objectives:** The esports industry has continued to see exponential growth in recent years (Statista, 2023). Despite this growth, there are concerns about the experiences of women in esports, primarily female esports players. For example, women in esports often experience harassment and discrimination online (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). Additionally, a recent non-academic, commercial survey also found almost 60% of female gamers have experienced abuse online, with 30% experiencing sexual harassment and exclusion from games (Bryter, 2020). Despite the clear presence of harassment within the esports industry, there is a lack of extensive, empirical research on the frequency and potential implications of such incidents specifically within esports literature on female players. This lack of research makes it challenging to fully comprehend the scale of the problem and develop effective strategies to address it. The aim is to investigate the extent of harassment experienced by female esports players and consequences on player performance and participation.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional design will be used to conduct a prevalence and burden study (Capili, 2021) on current female esports players to understand their experiences of harassment through esports participation. An online questionnaire will be implemented to assess and examine the overall frequency of harassment experienced by female players, and the subsequent burden associated with their willingness to participate in esports, potential time loss in participation from harassment, perceptions of gender identity, and their self-rated performance.

**Results:** Preliminary findings concerning the frequency of harassment and implications on female esports players will be discussed in the presentation.

**Conclusion:** The project intends to address the gap in quantitative literature on female esports players, and potentially encourage stakeholders and governing bodies to consider what steps can be taken to develop an environment in which women feel safe to thrive in esports.